

Standard USG-3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the continuing role of the United States Constitution in the defining and shaping of American government and society.

USG-3.1 Contrast the distribution of powers and responsibilities within the federal system, including the purpose, organization, and enumerated powers of the three branches; the workings of the Supreme Court; and the operation of the law-making process. (P)

Taxonomy Level: 2.6-B Understand Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

There will have been insignificant previous knowledge of this indicator. Students will have studied the development of federalism and separation of powers but will have little knowledge or understanding of the de facto operation of the national government.
4-4.2; USHC 2.7

It is essential for students to understand the concepts of limited government, checks/balances and separation of powers and how these are reflected in the structure and functioning of American government at national and state levels. Students should be able to describe the structure and operation of the three branches and how this structure enables each branch to appropriately function and execute its responsibilities as specified in the Constitution. Specifically students need to understand executive bureaucracy, the committee system within Congress, and the nature of the appellate and federal court system and the necessity of these “support” systems in enabling each branch to perform its duties. Students should be able to identify specific duties and responsibilities as an executive, legislative, or judicial function. Students should be able to detail the process of creating and executing a law.

It is not essential for students to identify the specific men/women who hold key offices within the structure of the national government, i.e., Chief Justice, Secretary of State, etc...

Assessment guidelines: The objective of this indicator is to contrast the distribution of power between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The primary focus of assessment should be on detailing the Constitutional responsibilities of each branch and explaining how the distribution of these responsibilities maintains a balance of power among the branches. Appropriate assessment would have students relate the responsibilities of each branch to its structure, describing how that structure enables each branch to function and carry out its responsibilities.